

'California Fish and Game' for January tells of the successful use of bombs and fireworks in frightening migrant birds from the rice fields and has an admirable article on the value of wild birds by Mr. J. G. Tyler.

The 'Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey' of the U. S. Department of Agriculture contains brief mention of investigations as to the food habits of the Starling which indicate that this bird has some desirable qualities and is not all bad. The question remains however, whether in spite of his destruction of ground insects he is not from sheer force of numbers crowding out of existence many of our native species in areas inhabited by him. Another pamphlet issued by the Biological Survey 'How to Attract Birds in the East Central States' is by W. L. McAtee and is similar to those already published for other sections of the country. The 'Audubon Bulletin' of the Illinois Audubon Society for the winter of 1917-1918 and the 'Seventh Annual Report of the New Jersey Audubon Society' are full of interesting matter concerning bird protection and bird study in these states and the former has an anonymous biographical sketch, with portrait, of Mr. Robert Ridgway, which will be read with great pleasure by everyone interested in the development of ornithology in America.

'Current Items of Interest' prepared by Mr. Henry Oldys contains an account of a Sparrow campaign at Davenport, Iowa, which seems to have been more successful than the English one already mentioned.

Cornell University has issued a circular announcing courses of instruction on wild life conservation and game breeding during 1918, while from the National Association of Audubon Societies come some attractive 'Audubon Pocket Bird Collections'—clever colored drawings by E. J. Sawyer of mounted specimens, represented as in a case with a 'catalogue' on the back arranged by Dr. Frank M. Chapman.

The 'Report of the National Zoölogical Park' contains an interesting note on the park as a bird sanctuary and a list of some 180 species of birds now living in the collection.—W. S.

Swarth on Jays of the Genus *Aphelocoma*.¹—The much discussed California Jays are again reviewed in this paper with the result that *Aphelocoma c. obscura* of the A. O. U. 'Check-List' is found to be identical with typical *A. californica* from Monterey but the bird of interior California generally supposed to be *californica* is different and is the same as *A. c. immanis*, described from Linn Co., Oregon, by Dr. Joseph Grinnell. All this seems to hinge upon the question as to which of two forms a type from somewhat intermediate territory belongs, and we have no doubt Mr. Swarth's deductions are correct. We would therefore be still in accord with the 'Check-List' so far as the number of races of *A. californica* is concerned were it not for the fact that Mr. Swarth comes to the conclusion

¹ The Pacific Coast Jays of the Genus *Aphelocoma*. By H. S. Swarth. University of California Publ. in Zool., Vol. 17, pp. 405-422. February 23, 1918.

that the birds from the coast region north of San Francisco Bay are different from either of the above. These he separates as *A. californica oocleptica* (p. 413), type locality Nicasio.

He also differs from Dr. Oberholser's recent conclusion that *A. hypoleuca* is merely a race of *A. californica*, as maintained in the A. O. U. 'Check-List,' and would give it full specific rank. The facts in regard to this group would seem to be now before us and any difference of treatment must be due to personal opinion.—W. S.

Wetmore on Palæochenoides mioceanus Shufeldt.¹—This name was based upon the fossilized distal end of the right femur of a bird which Dr. Shufeldt considered as related to the Anseres. Quoting from Dr. Shufeldt's paper we find "that this femur never belonged to any bird at all related to *Sula*, or to any of the Herons, or to *Pelecanus*, all of which have femora possessed of some characters, which, though not of wide difference, are quite sufficient to constitute discriminating ones, and to point to the fact that this great extinct fowl did not belong in any of those groups, as we know them, osteologically."

Now comes Mr. Wetmore with the results of another careful examination of this same bone fragment and we read that of five characters of the femur "*Palæochenoides* agrees with the Steganopodes in four, while in only one does it approach the Anseres...and it is referred without question to the Steganopodes." He further suggests that it was a Pelican-like bird of a somewhat generalized type showing resemblances to the Gannets and remotely to the Cormorants and Darters.

It would seem desirable that those who name fossil birds should not fashion their generic names on those of existing birds as it is embarrassing to find them shifted into other families or orders where the name becomes somewhat of a misnomer!

Mr. Wetmore's argument in the present case seems much the more convincing of the two that have been presented.—W. S.

Economic Ornithology in recent Entomological Publications.—

Some interesting original observations of the relations of birds to insect pests have recently been published by entomologists. They relate to the following insects:

Potato aphid (*Marcrosiphum solanifolii*). This new pest, because of the thoroughness and insidiousness of its attacks, is popularly known as the "Kaiser bug" in Ohio where it destroyed many potato fields. The following birds were observed actively feeding on the aphids: Chipping Sparrow, Quail, and English Sparrow.²

¹ The Relationships of the Fossil Bird *Palæochenoides mioceanus*. By Alexander Wetmore. The Journal of Geology, XXV, No. 6, Sept.-Oct., 1917.

² Houser, J. S., Guyton, T. L. and Lowry, P. R., Bull. 317, Ohio Agr. Exp. Sta., Nov. 1917, p. 80.